

A Florida Gallinule on the Coast of Massachusetts.—While the barge 'Geo. W. Stetson' was passing over the shoals near Pollock Rip lightship, about July 30, 1906, a strange bird alighted during the night on the deck. The crew tried to capture it, and it flew to sea again and out of sight, but a little later returned to the vessel and was captured. It was brought here and given to me for identification; it proved to be a Purple Gallinule (*Gallinula galeata*). This would seem to be considerably out of its ordinary range. I liberated it on some fresh-water marshes here (Beverly, Mass.), hoping it would find its way south with some other birds in the fall migration.—FRANK A. BROWN, *Beverly, Mass.*

The Short-eared Owl and Savanna Sparrow Breeding in Wayne County, Michigan.—Prior to the present season of 1906 I have met with the Short-eared Owl (*Asio accipitrinus*) and Savanna Sparrow (*Passerculus sandwichensis savanna*) as migrants only, and there seems to be no record of their occurrence in the height of the breeding season. I now take pleasure in placing on record positive proof of both species breeding in the county.

SHORT-EARED OWL.—On P. C. 618, Village of Grosse Pointe Farms, there is a tract of about 40 acres of land which was once under cultivation, but later abandoned as too low and swampy for successful crop raising. This has grown to grass, weeds and rushes according to the various elevations. Here, on May 30, Mr. Herbert Spicer and the writer watched a Marsh Hawk to her nest. She was wary and it took an hour and a quarter to do it. Twice during that time a male Short-eared Owl rose from the weeds near a tongue of bushes, extending from the bordering bush land, and drove the hawk from that vicinity. On each occasion he remained about a half hour in the air, apparently taking delight in the exercise, sometimes sailing on outstretched wings but mostly pounding the air with powerful strokes, the wings appearing to touch above his back and sweep downward nearly the whole semicircle. We carefully marked the spot where he went down and later worked toward it. When about 400 feet away the female sprang into the air, just out of gunshot range, and was joined by the male as she passed over him. They drifted before the wind nearly two miles, then worked back and sailed above us high in the air. We did not search thoroughly for the nest, as it was late in the day, and when we left the owls could be seen perched on the dead top of a large elm in the woods. I returned, June 10, accompanied by Messrs. Spicer, Wisener and my brother and, as they are experienced field men, I felt certain of success if a nest existed. We soon flushed both owls and this time they kept on going and were seen no more. The nest was soon found on a higher portion of the field, about twenty rods from the bordering bushes and close to where the female was flushed. It was a mere platform of dead marsh grass, half an inch thick and covering a spot of bare ground ten by eighteen inches. The long 'saw-grass' formed an arch over the nest,

but there was an opening at the easterly end leading into an open space about two feet wide by four long — a sort of play and feeding grounds for the young. One young bird was all the nest contained, but as this owl lays from four to seven, and usually five or six, eggs we concluded the remainder had concealed themselves. A systematic search soon brought to light another of the brood. It was squatted down, with beak and throat lying flat on the ground, and well concealed by the thick grass, further aided by its blending colors. It was some days older than the other, judging by its more advanced feather development. These two being all I desired for my collection, we immediately left the neighborhood so as not to further disturb the family and possibly secure a set of eggs next year. It is worthy of note that the nest and vicinity was kept clean of all castings, down, feathers, etc., that would tend to betray its existence.

The young proclaimed their defiance by a loud snapping of the mandibles, sometimes varied by a hiss, and when alone in another room frequently uttered a mournful little cooing note. While I was in sight they made no attempt to walk and merely squatted closer to the floor as I approached and touched them, but the moment they supposed themselves alone they seemed inspired with new life. They stood up, glanced quickly around and started away on a rapid run with neck and head extended forward, but instantly stopped and squatted when I appeared. Both threw up castings of mouse fur and bones. I made skins of them that night but have since regretted not keeping one alive for study.

SAVANNA SPARROW.—May 6, 1906, I found this sparrow numerous about some mud flats partly covered and surrounded by weeds. This piece of ground contained about six acres of P. C. 122, Village of Grosse Pointe Farms. These birds I regarded as migrants, but the conditions favoring a possible nesting place I returned June 10, when I found five pairs and secured a young bird just learning to fly.

I was over this same ground June 17 and 24, but the entire colony had disappeared, nor were they anywhere on the several square miles of suitable territory in that part of the county. The owls, also, were seen for the last time June 17.

This tends to confirm my opinion of what should constitute a breeding record. Articles sometimes appear entitled the breeding of certain birds in certain localities but we find, upon perusal, that the statements are backed by no stronger evidence than the fact of observing the birds in the breeding season or the taking of a full grown young or a female showing conclusive evidence of having recently reared a brood. I believe nothing should be accepted as a positive record except the finding of a nest containing eggs or young or the taking of a young bird not yet able to fly well.

The above colony of sparrows disappeared between June 10 and 17, and the Short-eared Owls between June 17 and 24. They may have gone to the extensive marshy meadow lands in St. Clair County, but wherever they went the possibility was open of some ornithologist securing parents and young only a few weeks from the nest in a locality where they did not

breed. Many similar cases have come to my notice, especially among the warblers.—J. CLAIRE WOOD, *Detroit, Michigan*.

The Breeding Habits of *Empidonax virescens* in Connecticut.—On June 2, 1906, I was out collecting, in Stamford, Conn., with Mr. W. H. Hoyt. We were searching for a Hooded Warbler's nest in a dense laurel brake on the bank of a stream, when Mr. Hoyt found a nest of the Green-crested Flycatcher. The nest was compactly built, resembling a rather shallow nest of the Red-eyed Vireo, and was suspended from a fork at the end of a bush sapling about eight feet from the ground. The nest contained three fresh eggs. Both birds were shot, and upon dissection it was evident that the set was complete.

We proceeded about a mile up the river and there found an apparently well established colony of the birds. We first found a nest at the end of a limb of a large hemlock tree. The nest was about eight feet from the ground and was composed of shreds of inner hemlock bark. The cup was very shallow, and while the mass was packed into a fairly solid nest, a considerable number of shreds hung down in festoons from the nest for eight or ten inches. The three eggs were slightly incubated, and the female was so bold in their defence, darting at us and striking our hands when we touched the nest, that we were finally obliged to kill her with a stick before we could take the eggs.

Within 200 yards of this nest, we saw two other pairs of these birds, evidently breeding, although we were unable to find the nests. We found, however, six old nests, of which two were in hemlocks and four in bushes. The nests are so characteristic in situation and structure that I think there can be little doubt that these old nests were also those of *Empidonax virescens*. The nests are so frail that I do not believe they could hold together more than two years, which would seem to imply that three or four pairs have bred in this colony for several years.

On June 7, 1906, I returned to make another search for the nests. I clearly located three pairs of the birds and finally found one nest. It was composed of dead grass and was so roughly thrown together, with the strings and ends hanging down so loosely, that I should never have guessed it was a new nest had I not seen the bird fly to it. It also contained three eggs, and the bird was quite wild and shy. The nest was, as usual, in a fork at the end of a beech limb, about nine feet from the ground.

There are two unreported records by local collectors of *Empidonax virescens* breeding in Stamford (one by Mr. W. H. Hoyt, and one by Mr. G. Rowell), but they were made a number of years ago, and were merely rare and irregular finds. These records apparently show that the bird breeds regularly in Stamford, and is probably very much commoner with us than has been hitherto supposed.—LOUIS N. PORTER, *Stamford, Conn.*

***Empidonax griseus* Brewster vs. *Empidonax canescens* Salvin and Godman.**—In 'The Auk' for January, 1904, p. 80, I published a note showing that the two names given above apply to the same bird and that